

1490 de 36

A

POETICAL EPISTLE, &c.

PRICE TWO SHILLINGS.

Entered at Stationers-Hall.

1790



A
P O E T I C A L
E P I S T L E
T O
J O H N W O L C O T,
COMMONLY KNOWN
BY THE APPELLATION
O F
P E T E R P I N D A R.

———Why should thy frantic rhymes
Traffic in slander, and invent new crimes?
Crimes which, existing only in thy mind,
Weak spleen brings forth to blacken all mankind.

CHURCHILL.

L O N D O N:
28
PRINTED FOR GEORGE RIEBAU, NO. 34, BUTCHER-ROW, TEMPLE BAR.
M,DCC,XC.

POLITICAL
 EPISTLES
 TO
 JOHN WOLCOT

COMMONLY KNOWN
 BY THE APPELLATION

PETER

 D.A.R.

————Why should thy name be known
 Trifling in hands, and in vain new crimes
 Crimes which, existing only in thy mind,
 Weak speech brings forth to blacken all mankind.
 CHURCHILL.

LONDON:
 PRINTED FOR GEORGE RIBBAULT, NO. 34, BUTCHER-ROW, TEMPLE BAR.
 MDCCLXXC.

A N

E P I S T L E, &c.

O MUSE!—that gav'st to Juvenal the line
 Where nervous sense and majesty combine;
 The scoundrel's scourge, the proud man's bitter gall,
 Whose home-told truths e'en hypocrites appal:
 Maid of Parnassus, grant me all that fire
 Thy Churchill boasted, let each line inspire
 To virtue and to fame th' unletter'd crowd;
 Nor let, in vain, strict justice call aloud.

For vengeance dire, on that devoted elf,
Whose trade is slander, and whose god is self.

Thee, Wolcott ! son of infamy, I hail;
Thy dastard mind so black, thy head so frail,
Are subjects fit for satire's chastening verse ;
Where candour dwells not, candour shall rehearse :
Thy actions, each deep ting'd in deadly hue,
Than Shylock's self thou prov'st a better Jew !
True to his creed, he fought the Christian's life,
But thou art melancholy when not at strife
With the wide world ; thy servants are thy foes,
Thy family, thy friend, no mercy knows :
Food for thy dastard spleen are all mankind ;
From slander, justice can no refuge find.
If but one foible glimmers in his soul,
Where hosts of virtues all the man control,

If

If piety adorns his heav'nly breast,
 And charity doth sooth the poor to rest,
 'Thou swear'st 'tis double-fac'd hypocrisy,
 And mask'd from vulgar eyes, lurks villainy.

No sooner peace has sooth'd our happy isle,
 From foreign jealousy, from foreign broil;
 When plenty decks the tables of the poor,
 And hospitality kindly opes the door
 To wand'ring trav'lers, weary'd on their way,
 Starving and comfortless, for thee they'd stray
 Till heaven and earth were one, 'till poverty
 To thy green eye had been dishonesty;
 And thou, an evil humour to allay,
 Revengefully hadst sworn their lives away.

How

How furcharg'd with happiness was thy foul,
 When Gordon made with blood the kennels roll;
 A madman's frolic gave thee such delight,
 Th' aspiring flames so gratified thy sight;
 If cowardice had not lurk'd within thy mind,
 The ruffian's policy had been refin'd.
 Proud, ambitious, yet fearful for thy fate,
 The hangman's trouble,—not the cares of state
 Disturb'd thy breast, in *red* thou'd sign thy name,
 And damn'd proscriptions raise a tyrant's fame.

As when the wolf doth prowl along for prey,
 He hides his murders from the god of day;
 So honour'd Pindar's name thou basely steals,
 While the arcana of thy heart reveals

One more appropriate to the worst of crimes
That e'er disgrac'd the sons of modern times.

SIR SAPSKULL SLANDERER be thy title:
Thy history may the world enlighten.
Scar'd by some hideous dream, some frightful elf,
Thy dam brought forth a monster in thyself.
As the infant Hercules serpents slew,
John kill'd an harmless kitten too :
With passion, oft he'd tear his Sunday cloaths,
And when he lisp'd, he'd lisp the worst of oaths.
At school the blockhead daily felt the rod,
And oft, for evil-fake, revil'd his God.
This was not all, when mischief e'er was done,
'Twas he who headed all the school-boys' fun ;

Of neighbours windows broke full fifty score,
 And damn'd his luck for not destroying more;
 Hostilities he'd wage with all the school,
 Scoundrels and cheats call some, and others fool,
 Till bruiz'd most sorely for his witless spleen,
 Cuff'd, and kick'd, for accusations false and mean;
 As he came—a dunce—so he home return'd,
 By his playmates laugh'd at, by his master spurn'd.

Next an apothecary he became,
 On empty boxes rais'd a shallow fame;
 Bled bumpkins in the hæmorrhoidal vein,
 And scrap'd a pittance—by augmenting pain.
 Full many a year he thus proceeded,
 And in quackery so far succeeded,

As

As to raise his name for vile detraction,
 For harden'd cruelty, and exaction.
 Alike to him were all his musty drugs,
 And chymicals, arrang'd in broken jugs ;
 Rhubarb, bark, cantharides were the same ;
 Salts and oils differ'd only in their name :
 Jalap made an excellent purgation,
 Rais'd the piles, or footh'd an inflammation,
 And *aqua pura haustus* oft was giv'n
 To cure a cacoethes of the skin.
 In the green sickness turmerick would do,
 And for *confect. aro.* saffron sav'd a fous ;
 In ague and fever, any mixture did ;
 And for broken legs and fractures horrid,
 He'd use the hottest spices possible,
 To make your illness long, and profitable ;

If

If by prolonging life, he gain'd a shilling,
 So let it be, God and nature willing ;
 If by instant death, he won a farthing,
 Various were his modes, sometimes by starving ;
 But crude arsenic was his best prescription,
 Arsenic told no tales, nor dealt in fiction.
 Patient poverty he oft thus treated,
 For with poverty he never feasted ;
 Poverty paid no bills : yet he advis'd
 With poverty, and often sympathis'd,
 To obtain a character for feeling,
 Both profitable and well beseeming.

Though hosts of creditors assail'd the door,
 Surly JOHN WOLCOT threaten'd, storm'd, and swore ;

He

He kill'd for reputation, cur'd for gold ;
 And if his dying patient's conscience's fold
 To Belzebub—perdition feize his foul,
 He would not bate one farthing of the whole !

Too slowly thus you scrap'd together wealth,
 By killing some, to others selling health ;
 Longer—too proud to grovel in the mire,
 Swoln ambition prompted thee to aspire
 To glory, power tempted thee to court
 Tyrawley's favour, no more the vile sport
 Of country bumpkins, and detraction's friend,
 Cornwall lost what angels could never mend.

Acrofs the briny deep you took your course ;
 Absence ne'er griev'd your friends, or did remorse

One tear propel down the fair damsel's cheek
 To falsify the deeds the tongue could speak.
 Had not hypocrisy veil'd suspicion,
 Had not thy heart been callous to contrition,
 Had not the governor been madly blind,
 Thy face had been an index of thy mind.
 But the Almighty has it thus ordain'd,
 The bad in villainy shall be maintain'd,
 To prove the acts and virtues of the just,
 How faithfully in heav'n they place their trust.
 For some such menial purpose God made thee,
 Willing to cheat thy father for a fee;
 Thy firmest friend to slay, thyself to sell,
 And raise rebellion 'gainst the chief of hell;
 Satan may make thee his prime minister,
 Should it prove so—*per artes sinister*

You'd

You'd roll your sovereign from off his throne,
And make dark Erebus with tortures groan.

With Sir George arriv'd on burning plains,
Intent on government and paltry gains,
Tyrawley fick, you moulded to your will ;
And his station, pride taught you how to fill.
Eager for fame, you soar'd an eagle's flight,
But owl-like, lost your senses in the light,
Which gave to others reason to unveil
A mind so black, rul'd by a head so frail.
No longer physic yielded new designs
Of grief, unable to invent new crimes ;
Corrosive poisons were too sure a source
Of dissolution ; one unvary'd course

Pall'd

Pall'd upon thy fenfes, ceas'd to delight
 A man whose foul was mischief, and whose fight
 Sicken'd at beholding others bleffed,
 Himself fo miferly and fo wretched.

Fortunate for all, fhort liv'd the power
 Thy genius granted thee, in evil hour ;
 Thy bud of happinefs had fcarcely blown,
 Than all its beauties in an hour were flown.
 Thy patron died—when trying on the gown,
 And a rich living reckon'd for thy own ;
 From difeafe apoftate, to religion ;
 None but muft lament fuch ftrange tranfition.
 Damn'd difappointment now disturb'd thy foul,
 Thy frenzy, fympathy could ne'er control ;

But

But who would minister such balm to thee?
 Thy callous mind, so chain'd to infamy,
 Would sooner torture all the world with grief,
 Than by one noble act afford relief
 To the fond fair, torn by wrongs unnumber'd,
 When no pleasing charms their woes have slumber'd
 To sweet oblivion, to fascination
 Lovely, and with cherishing persuasion,
 Of possessing in far futurity,
 Threefold happiness in security.

Jamaica, by all the plagues infected ;
 Thy mind distracted, thyself suspected,
 Tortur'd thy dreams into ten thousand shapes
 Of miserable death, by poison'd snakes ;
 Or, as the porcupine, some monster arm'd
 With fev'rish fury, all thy breast alarm'd.

Oft as the hypocondriac swell'd thy brain
 With fancy's fairy form, and midnight pain ;
 Then burning wretchedness awak'd thy mind,
 And dawning day thy many woes unbind,
 And loose the damn'dest tortures on thy head
 That flaming Tartarus had ever bred.
 Tedious did pass each distracted day,
 And midnight horrors all thy soul dismay ;
 Stern apparitions stalk the silent plain,
 And o'er the deep the mad'ning furies reign !
 Each moment brings the villain's works to view,
 And whisp'ring conscience thy dark deeds pursue ;
 Then disappointment racks thy haunted soul,
 And frenzy'd fury all thy thoughts control.
 Fierce passions, contending with each other,
 Did all soothing friendships quickly smother ;

But

But to thee, friendship only was a veil,
 To borrow money, to avoid a jail,—
 Vile interest always was thy meaning,
 And thy hypocrisy was well befitting:
 You always bore a smile upon your face,
 Yielding the worst of hearts the best of grace.
 No more could foreign climes afford a home,
 On schemes of wealth—no more thy mind could roam;
 Each tyrannic thought was quickly faded,
 With avarice constantly upbraided,
 Clandestinely you travers'd back the main,
 Deceiv'd by all thy luring hopes of gain;
 And rack'd by wretchedness and inward pain,
 Starving, wild—Cornwall once more was courted;
 But trick on trick had been too long sported
 To obscure thy character's complexion,
 From thy cautious countrymen's inspection.

Banish'd

Banish'd from thy realms, vile *London* took thee,
 When qualms of conscience had long forsook thee,
 A poet, painter, music smatterer,
 Behold him grown a mighty chatterer—
 On hautboys, bagpipes, fiddlesticks, and drums,
 With the Jew's-harp, so pleasant to the gums :
Mara is sweet, and *Billington* divine !
 So swears this mongrel offspring of the Nine :
 Yet marrow-bones to thee gave fifty charms
 You ne'er could taste in lovely Mary's* arms ;
 Sweet nymph, how miserable her station,
 Coop'd up with thee, is gross infatuation ;
 A spruce plump pullet, food for impotence,
 And Mother Jones's† Irish insolence.

* John Wolcot's mistress, and a charming girl she is.

† John's servant.

Puff'd up with confidence from Opie's name,
 A Cornish clown you fashion'd into fame ;
 Of genius some, of impudence a store,
 Thy art soon moderniz'd the country boor ;
 To copy paintings by the ladies made,
 Or faces wash'd, pourtray some haggard jade.
 To academic royal his hopes were rais'd,
 And you in doggrel rhymes his paintings prais'd,—
 Abus'd all others of noted merit ;
 Swore West was flimsy, and wanted spirit,
 Had no design, his colouring was bad ;
 And when he took the brush was surely mad,
 To think of gaining riches and renown,
 Had not he luckily cajol'd a crown
 Into wild admiration of his frames,
 Wherein the prophets play their pious games ;

Indiscriminate abuse you scatter'd,
 And those of humble note were flatter'd,
 In being link'd with honour'd company,
 Of thy *judgment* ample testimony :—
 Sandby, Ruffel, Rigaud, were food for spleen,
 And all his beauties Gainfb'rough could not screen ;
 Where elegance and sweetness are combin'd,
 And nature's image fascinates the mind,
 Thy fervent genius, Gainfb'rough, soar'd on high,
 And future ages shall thy charms descry :
 When envy ceases to deform the mind,
 A rural coronet thy brows shall bind.

You say that Hamilton is infernal bad ;
 If I knew you not, I should think thee mad :
 He has powers to tame the savage heart,
 The blandishments of colour to impart ;

Both

Both chaste and accurate he soars aloof,
 In composition bold, yet curb'd by truth.—
 You scarcely to Sir Joshua yield that praise
 With which the world hath honour'd all his days !
 Nature resolv'd to o'erbound her usual course,
 Drain'd her pure springs of genius to their source,
 A true painter, poet, and musician,
 A deep philosopher, and logician ;
 The scholar and the gentleman grac'd the whole,
 Combin'd with all the virtues of the soul.
 Such was the man whose merits grac'd the chair,
 And Opie thought himself his rightful heir. —
 True's the observation, that impudence
 Is close ally'd to narrow ignorance—
 Else thy dunce had ne'er possess'd th' assurance,
 Scarce to be believ'd, and past endurance.

Perhaps

Perhaps a noble dinner made thee smile,
And artfully his sense you thus beguile:—

“ Opie, thou art greater than all the brood

“ That in the field of painting seek their food ;

“ Raphael, Titian, are nobody to thee,

“ Vandyke no better than a grov'ling flea ;

“ Rubens in colouring is vilely poor,

“ And Michael Angelo I can't endure.

“ When with R. A's compar'd, thou art the man

“ To curb the hopes of this aspiring clan ;

“ In execution far above the rest,

“ And who so much the gentleman—when drest,

“ Whose so neat, so spruce, so wondrous jemmy ?

“ Bunn's fair daughter* thought thee vastly pretty.

“ Do but have courage, John—the place is thine ;

“ Hold up thy finger—all with thee must join.”

* Now Opie's wife.

Thus

Thus subtly you ensnare his shallow brains,
 And rack his soul with stern ambition's pains ;
 Fascinated by thy kind opinion,
 He scan'n'd not the artifice of his minion,
 But daily ask'd thee to eat a dinner,
 And thus you became a daily winner.
 He to the council all his hopes unfold;
 And jealousy he thinks makes many cold ;
 Others sneeringly yield their approbation,
 And surely some want discrimination ;
 But, on th' election, all, he has no doubt,
 Will find poor stupid Johnny's merit out.

But painting critiques yield but profits small,
 And starvation is horrid to befall
 A hero, form'd for turtle devastation,
 Whose appetite would distress a nation.

G

As

As one day musing, you lower'd at home,
Beheld the empty plates, the naked bone,
With frenzy wild you started from your seat,
And solemnly your sorrows thus did greet :

“ Maid of the hill ! that gave me lyric fire,
“ With tales and odes my genius to inspire,
“ Grant me some little fame, some little wealth,
“ And in o'erflowing bowls I'll drink thy health ;
“ Full fix-and-thirty hours in want of food,
“ No cloaths or rags to pawn, my stomach good ;
“ Furnish my mind with some new suggestion,
“ Some droll lie, which none will ever question.
“ Exists there nobody of high degree
“ Whose foibles need no microscope to see,
“ Whose homely trifles all his spirits raise,
“ To swell my pockets and exalt my lays ?”

Scarcely

Scarcely this soliloquy had clos'd,
 Your haggard eyes with deep dejection roll'd,
 When suddenly a smile o'erspreads your face,
 And sparkling gladness every feature grace.
 The fair had kindly whisper'd all you ask'd ;
 And now at kings the tiger's talons grasp'd :
 At Windfor and St. James's, spies were plac'd
 To pick up anecdotes which none disgrac'd :
 How soon his Majesty from bed did rise,
 If sleep did close his scrutinizing eyes ;
 If the conversation turn'd on horses,
 Or on Pitt's electioneering losses ;
 Or with his subjects talk'd on trifling things,
 To dispel those cares the diadem brings ;
 Or on his plate a louse did chance to fall,
 Lo ! the base insect liv'd not far to crawl.

Or

Or, if Whitbread's brew-house him invited,
He had reason to be much delighted.

Incidents like these have you perverted,
And damn'd monsters of your brain asserted ;
Your sovereign most infamously abus'd,
And lies with truth maliciously confus'd ;
The blackest conscience must disturb thy rest,
The vilest passions agonize thy breast,
When you survey the falsehoods of your mind,
To torture all the world, by hell design'd.
If potent majesty had done thee wrong,
And intentionally thy griefs prolong,
Had all thy soul been rack'd with many woes,
And madness dire thy sorrows should disclose,
Then must a scene of infamy unveil
The brazen clouds that o'er thy deeds prevail—

What

What orgies now can stimulate to shame
 The harden'd man, whose conscience knows no blame?
 Can philanthropy find a real friend
 In thee, when int'rest is your only end?
 Yet you on innate virtue have declaim'd,
 And many a character vilely blam'd
 For those vices by yourself committed,
 And so grossly by the state permitted.

If meagre poverty laid on her fangs,
 And thy body tortur'd with many pangs,
 Still was it base your king to scandalize,
 In virtue truly great, in judgment wise :
 Yet his subjects gratified thy wishes,
 His *hopeful son* paid thee with good dishes ;

Made thee his confidant, his bosom friend ;
 When he the kingdom rul'd, (which Heav'n forefend)
 Farther *promis'd* thee ample recompence,
 By resigning—all his virtue, all his sense.

Others of meaner note have fill'd thy mind
 With thoughts extravagant, and strictures wild,
 Banks, Boswell, Nichols were alike to thee,
 And Thrale, with Johnson, brought no humble fee ;
 Your tomahawk slash'd thro' the learned hosts,
 And would-be poets chang'd to ghastly ghosts ;
 E'en pond'rous Hawkins sunk before thy quill,
 And oblivion all thy prophecies fulfil ;
 Yet, have *they* injur'd thee ? whom thou treatest
 So scurvily, whose foibles thou greetest

Their

Their small abundance of, their needy store
Gives thee opportunity to explore
The impervious labyrinths of thy mind—
Villainy to forge ; villainy refin'd—
First taught thee how to blacken all mankind.

Off, thou intruder, from Apollo's mount !
Thy lines ne'er issu'd from the poet's fount,
From the Lethean stream thy listless lays
Flow heavily along, with wither'd bays
Borne by the wat'ry waste, a prey to fools,
Or crown some *genius* form'd of senseless rules.

The horrid ranklings of a wicked mind
Rul'd by a head so shallow, and so blind

To

To others excellence, implies a soul
Form'd for mischief, under the damn'd control
Of Tartarus and all its imps of woe,
Born to torment humanity's deadly foe.

You, WOLCOT, are ambaffador from hell,
In wretchedness to chain the frantic world,
The devil gave thee art, but I foretel
All thy mischiefs will on thy head be hurl'd,

F I N I S.

